

The Worst Day In My Life

The worst day in my life. The absolute worst.

What is it, you might ask? Or, what happened? I'm old and I don't like talking, but I guess I'll tell somebody for once.

I was a little girl back then, only around eleven or twelve. Before that day, I was just a regular girl, learning French and exploring the world. I had a neighbor back then, which I called Mr. Mean. He was always scowling. Mr. Mean used to be a doctor, Mom said, but I just couldn't believe that. He just was too mean to be a doctor. The normal life of dreading schoolwork and slinking through the shadows when I saw Mr. Mean in his lawn all changed when I got tested for this disease. Of course, there are vaccines these days, but back then whenever people heard Covid-19, they would panic and buy more masks, more sanitizers. I was, back then, always bold, never really listening to those procedures. I regretted it, however, when I got Covid myself.

It was a rainy day, and I went to the doctor's office to do my annual checkup. At first my family thought it was nothing, this thing in the lungs, but when we had to go to the local hospital, we knew it was a serious problem. In there, everything looked so blank, so sad. I had to wear this tube that was incredibly itchy. At first some nurses took care of me, but one day, a doctor came in. His name was Dr. Marge, his badge said. He was familiar, but it was still weird when my body instinctively shuddered when I saw him. He looked like Mr. Mean, but he had that kindness in his eyes that wasn't anything like the Mr. Mean I knew.

I only remember sleeping and the pain, oh the pain! It wasn't like anything I've ever felt before. Can you imagine what it feels like to have your lungs on fire? That pain grew as the days went by, making me shudder every time as a spasm went through me.

The morning of that day, I knew something was wrong. Dr. Marge didn't do the morning checkup. Usually, he would come at around 9:00, but today he didn't show up. Instead, this other doctor came to check on me. When I asked him about Dr. Marge, he didn't say anything. It was weird. Maybe he took a day off, I thought, but that was unlikely because the other doctor could've told me. By then, I was praying to God that he wasn't in any accidents.

At lunch, he didn't show up either. He would usually talk with me about his day at lunch and ask me how I was feeling. The food tasted weird without someone to talk to. I was still trying to convince myself that he didn't get into any trouble, but it was getting harder and harder. I remember my feeling of dread in the bottom of my stomach.

At dinner, I braved myself and asked the nurse about him. The nurse looked uneasy, but seeing my face, she sighed.

"Maybe it's time to tell you. You probably know that he spends most of his time with you, but you probably don't know that because he didn't want you to be lonely, he got infected by the disease because of it." I was shocked! Even back then, I knew what the cost of getting this disease was. It was surprising that he would help me so much. My heart swelled.

"He didn't want to break the schedule with you, therefore without treatment, he..." I closed my eyes, gesturing for her to stop. Somehow, I knew what she was about to say before she said it.

I just thought about the times he talked about his day, thought about how he always stuffed a cookie into my lunchbox. I wished I had known him better. I still do to this day. It was almost midnight when I fell asleep. I dreamed of Dr. Marge, waking me up in the morning and sitting down with me at lunch. I blamed myself for not being careful, for going into this hospital, and

for killing him. If I weren't here, he would still be alive! I remember crying. I was never the crying type, but that night, I cried my eyes out.

When I woke up, numb, I almost started crying again when I saw a letter from Dr. Marge. I ripped open the envelope, hoping for a miracle.

Dear Ali,

You might be reading this when I am dead, or you might be reading this when you have recovered. If you got better, congratulations! I'm not sure if I'm going to die because of this stupid disease, but since my condition is getting worse, I assume that I won't have many days with you left. I know that I will die one day, it is just the matter of sooner or later. Don't blame yourself for anything that will happen. I chose it. You made my day, when I talked with you. You always sounded so optimistic!

You may be wondering why your neighbor, who you call Mr. Mean, has the same last name as me. Maybe because I'm him...

Well, hope you get better!

Dr. Marge

I was shocked! He was Mr. Mean! He... He wasn't really mean, but...

Sniffle. I still can't bear talking about him, even to this day...

After that, I got better, recovered, and lived to this age. I don't want to forget him, and so I'm recording this memory. I still have the letter he sent me, always kept in the frame on my bedside table. He saved my life in a lot of ways, but I can't pay him back now. I regret not knowing him,

I really do. I guess that's the end of the recording! Young folks that are hearing this, remember, that kindness is like a boomerang, it always comes back. Always.